(c) whether National Environmental Engineering Research Institute has investigated and found that this large scale mining has caused serious erosion in the health standards and significant loss of forests?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) State Government being the owners of minerals grant mining leases, prior approval of the Central Government is mandatory in case of minerals in the First Schedule of Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. 17 prior approvals for grant of mining lease for iron ore and manganese have been granted in Bellary District of Karnataka after the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) gave its recommendations.

(b) No Sir.

(c) Yes Sir. However, in view of the recommendations of NEERI to ensure scientific mining along with environmental protection measurs to mitigate the problems of over-burden disposal, the Ministry of Mines accords prior approval for grant of mining leases for only those proposals which have an approved mining plan.

National Mineral Policy

†36. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of State had announced in Orissa recently that Government will announce a National Mineral Policy within next two months;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(c) whether this will diminish the rights of the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) The Minister of State had stated in the Conference that the High Level Committee, constituted to *inter alia* review the National Mineral Policy, is submitting its report shortly to the Government.

(b) and (c) In view of (a) above, do not arise.Control of Iron Ore Mining by few individuals.

Control of Iron Ore mining by few individuals

37. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.